

Guidelines for Petting Zoos, Animal Fairs, Shows and Exhibits

Interactions between people and animals provide valuable and enjoyable educational experiences that should be encouraged. However, during such contact, there is some risk of disease transmission. To protect both humans and animals, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture in consultation with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services encourages all fairs to implement the following precautionary steps to protect both visitors and animals from disease.

- 1. Provide a Hand-cleaning Station for use prior to and after contact with animals.**
 - a. Provide running water or antibacterial hand wipes to clean dirt off hands**
 - b. Provide *alcohol-based hand rub gels* for use on clean hands**
- 2. Provide cleaning supplies in a safe manner to protect visitors and animals**
 - a. Trash cans should be available to prevent animals from eating the wipes**
- 3. Post signs indicating:**
 - a. The location of the Hand-cleaning Station or facilities when they are some distance from the exhibit**
 - b. The procedure to be followed**
 - c. The importance of the procedure**
 - d. Post the “Lose the Germs” poster series, or similar signs**
- 4. Do not allow human food or drink in animal contact areas.**
- 5. Forbid smoking in animal contact areas, and at Hand-cleaning stations.**
- 6. Ensure that no feed is fed to the animals unless specifically provided by the fair.**
- 7. Children younger than 5 years old need supervision with hand washing. Never allow children to put their hands or objects (ex. pacifiers) in their mouths while interacting with animals.**

Further information on ways to minimize the spread of disease from animals to visitors is available from the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/healthypets/spotlight_an_exhbts.htm

The National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians also has guidelines at <http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendiaAnimals.html>

“Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings” can be viewed at the CDC website at www.cdc.gov

Scroll to MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report), and look for the following issue: October 25, 2002 /Vol. 51/ No. RR-16. Recommendations are summarized in pp 32-34.